UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
PHOENIX DISTRICT OFFICE

Phoenix District Integrated Weed Management Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-AZ-P000-2015-0001-EA

Finding of No Significant Impact

I, the undersigned authorized officer, considering the criteria provided by 40 CFR 1508.27 and the information contained in the Phoenix District Integrated Weed Management Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-AZ-P000-2015-0001-EA), and as explained further below, find that the proposed action and alternatives will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement does not need to be prepared.

Context

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared a programmatic environmental assessment (EA) for Integrated Weed Management on the Phoenix District. The BLM proposes to treat target weed species identified from field reconnaissance and/or potential weed species that could occur in the district. The target weed species include Arizona state-listed weeds and other invasive plant species, as defined by the Arizona Department of Agriculture Noxious Weed List and the BLM National List of Invasive Weed Species of Concern, found on BLM-administered lands.

The programmatic EA tiers to the Final Vegetation Treatment Using Herbicides on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) and the Final Vegetation Treatments on BLM Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Report (PER).

The programmatic analysis in this EA will be referred to in future efforts to conduct early detection and rapid response treatments to weed infestations. Prior to conducting treatments, a Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA) process would be initiated to ensure that the analysis conducted in the EA is sufficient. At that time, a decision would be issued to authorize treatments to be conducted.

Intensity

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse

The EA describes potential short-term adverse impacts to several resources that would result from treatment implementation due to human activity and associated use of equipment and vehicles, and during the period immediately following treatment when visual and habitat resources may be impacted as treated areas re-establish with native vegetation. Treatments would be designed to support long-term benefits for all resources by re-establishing native vegetation communities and habitat.

2. Degree of effect on public health and safety
No impacts to public health and safety are anticipated from this action. Standard operating procedures (SOPs) and best management practices (BMPs) provide guidance and would be followed by the BLM to ensure that risks to human health and the environment from treatment actions would be kept to a minimum. The SOPs and BMPs are included in Appendix E of the EA.

3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas
The project area encompasses the entire 2.4 million acres managed by the Phoenix District, which includes many of the resources listed above. However, the treatments would be designed to minimize or completely avoid any impacts to sensitive resources using the SOPs and BMPs listed in Appendix E of the EA as well as additional site specific mitigation where necessary.

4. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial
Public scoping meetings were held on December 14, 2010 at the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) and on December 15, 2010 at the Gila Bend Community Center. The meetings were advertised via local newspapers, radio, and a press release. One person attended the public meeting at the AZGFD with no comments. A total of three people attended the public meeting at the Gila Bend Community Center. The EA was available for public comment for 30 days between August 6, 2015 and September 7, 2015 and no comments were received. Neither the analysis nor the level of public involvement indicates a high level of controversy related to the proposed action.

5. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk
Integrated weed management has become a common practice for government agencies and private industry to manage undesirable vegetation and maintain healthy ecosystems. The effects of the proposed treatment methods are well understood and do not involve any unique or unknown risks.

6. Degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration
All decisions related to implementation of weed management treatments would be considered at a later date with site specific review of the analysis in the programmatic EA to ensure that it adequately discloses all expected impacts. All future proposed actions not described in the this EA would continue to be subject to further evaluation in accordance with BLM and NEPA regulations and policies.

7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts
Cumulative impacts are discussed for each alternative under each resource section in Chapter 4 of the EA. No significant impacts were identified.

8. Degree to which the action may adversely affect district, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed on the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources
The proposed action requires avoidance of all cultural resources and, therefore, no adverse effects to these resources are anticipated.

9. Degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat
The BLM consulted with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on all of the potentially affected threatened and endangered species and their habitat. A letter was issued by the USFWS on August 11, 2015 that states concurrence with the BLM's recommended determination of may affect, but not likely to adversely affect, the threatened and endangered species and proposed and designated critical habitat located within the project area. Conservation measures have been incorporated into the proposed action to minimize effects.

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local environmental protection law
The proposed action has been developed and reviewed in accordance with applicable agencies to ensure its consistency with plans and requirements of other Federal, State, and local agencies.

Patrick Putnam
Acting District Manager
Phoenix District Office

9-16-15
Date